

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1943.

Mr. Chairman & Gentlemen,

I have the honour of laying before you the Report of the late Medical Officer of Health for Penistone, Dr. A. G. Wilson, the statistics of which, were compiled by him, shortly before his death. In view of the paper shortage, it has been necessarily curtailed:-

The type of presentation I have chosen is; (1) all the vital statistics for this district, with comparisons between the rest of England & Wales, and, (2) some remarks upon Housing, Water Supply, and some remarks upon General Health & Hygiene.

Births. During 1943, there were registered the births of 51 boys and 47 girls, giving a total of 98 live births. The birth rate was 16.5 per thousand, and that for England & Wales was also 16.5 per thousand. You will notice that the birth rates correspond exactly, but the Death and Infantile Mortality rates are considerably lower in Penistone, than for the rest of the country. There is a popular fallacy which I would like to correct, and that is, that it is safer for a mother to have her baby in a Nursing Home than in her own home. This is not so. The death rate for mothers who have babies in ordinary clean homes is very little different from the figures from often very expensive Nursing Homes. In this connection, I want to point out as I did many years ago, that the mortality rate amongst mothers in one of the wealthiest parts of London (Westminster), where the majority of mothers were confined in expensive Nursing Homes, was just about the same as for Jarrow, which was then considered the most derelict and overcrowded area in England.

Infantile Mortality. In addition to the total of 98 live births, there were two still births, which do not affect the Infantile Mortality Rate. Two infants died before reaching the age of twelve months, giving an Infantile Mortality Rate of 20.4 per thousand, for Penistone, and 49 per thousand for England & Wales.

Deaths. There were 50 deaths out of a population of 5,873, giving a death rate of 8.5 per thousand. The death rate for England & Wales was 12.1 per thousand. I must warn you that though these rates for Penistone look very good, it is impossible to get a true finding, when dealing with so small a population. There was no great preponderance of any one cause of deaths. It is worthy of remark that two males died of pulmonary tuberculosis, only one of influenza, while cancer of various organs caused the death of five males and three females. It is inevitable that the longer people live, the more likely are they to die of cancer, which is a disease of late age. No road traffic deaths were reported. It is note-worthy, that no fewer than seven males and two females died of various types of heart disease.

Water. During the year, 95,000,000 gallons of water were sold to Darton, and 32,754,000 gallons to the Railway Co. The domestic Water Supply was adequate in quantity and quality.

Housing. The problem of Post-War Housing is going to be a difficult one. I consider, that if all minor defects be dealt with, as soon as possible, as they arise, this will undoubtedly decrease the very great expenditure necessary after the War. I will tell you again, that my standard of housing, is that every house should be fit for a woman to have a baby in.

Nutrition. Both in children, and in older healthy people, it has been satisfactory. I must point out that in a semi-rural district like ours, the people are always better fed, than a similar class of people in large towns.

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Infectious Diseases. During the year, the following cases of Infectious Diseases were notified:-

Measles.	100.
Scarlet Fever.	26.
Whooping Cough.	19.
Acute Pneumonia.	1.
Erysipelas.	1.

All the Scarlet Fever cases were removed to Hospital.

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) ALFRED A. MASSER, M.B. Ch.B.

ACTING MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

